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FOR ACTION

# CONFERENCE FACILITIES AT THE PREMISES OF UNICEF HEADQUARTERS

SUMMARY

The present report has been prepared in accordance with Executive Board decision 1994/R.1/1 (E/ICEF/1994/13 (Part I)) to examine further the question of conference facilities at the premises of UNICEF headquarters. It reviews relevant developments since the Executive Board's first regular session of 1994, outlines the possibilities for constructing a conference facility at UNICEF House and at 633 Third Avenue, compares the technical aspects and costs of those two options, addresses the possibilities of sharing of facilities with other agencies and refers to the question of financing.

The Executive Director recommends that: (a) the feasibility study of the two options selected (the Labouisse Hall at UNICEF House and 633 Third Avenue) be completed; (b) several relevant pending issues be clarified, in particular those relating to additional cost items (including the cost of outfitting the conference facilities), availability of interpreters and other staff, the possibility of cost-sharing between UNICEF, the United Nations Development Programme and the United Nations Population Fund and the financing of the conference facility; (c) work on the conference facilities begin only after financing has been assured; and (d) that further progress be reported to the Executive Board at its first regular session of 1995.

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## INTRODUCTION

1. The present report has been prepared in accordance with decision 1994/R.1/1 (E/ICEF/1994/13 (Part I)), adopted by the Executive Board at its first regular session of 1994. In that decision, the Board requested further information regarding developments of conference facilities at the premises of UNICEF headquarters, pursuant to General Assembly resolution 48/162 of 20 December 1993, in annex I to which the Assembly invited certain United Nations funds and programmes to hold regular Executive Board sessions at their headquarters premises.

2. Since the first regular session in February 1994, the secretariat has conducted a preliminary review of the technical feasibility of various options. The working assumption has been that interpretation facilities would be required for all six official languages of the United Nations and that some 120 seats would be needed to accommodate both Board members and observers, as well as secretariat staff. Due consideration was also given to state-of-the-art technologies such as tele-conferencing, electronic document transmission and video facilities.

3. The various possibilities which were considered are: (a) at UNICEF House, a floor between floors 2 and 12 and the Labouisse Hall, on the B1 level; and (b) the future UNICEF premises at 633 Third Avenue.

## I. POSSIBILITIES AT UNICEF HOUSE AND AT 633 THIRD AVENUE

4. A floor at UNICEF House between floors 2 and 12. The low ceiling height of any of the floors between 2 and 12 would likely either prohibit installation of interpretation booths or result in high costs owing to removal of existing suspended ceilings and rerouting of air-conditioning equipment. Converting one floor in UNICEF House into a conference facility would also require that new office space be rented to accommodate the staff displaced from that floor and that offices on some of the functionally linked floors be rearranged.

5. Henry Labouisse Hall, floor B1. Already present are an entry foyer, coat closets, a kitchen and pantry, etc. The ceiling is high enough to allow for proper installation of booths for six interpreters and a sound engineer. The disadvantage, however, would be that use of the Hall by staff would be restricted and additional space would be needed for activities presently held there, such as staff assemblies, training and briefing sessions, workshops, presentations, meetings of the New York and Global Staff Associations, consultations between the secretariat and non-governmental organizations and public affairs and advocacy programmes.

6. 633 Third Avenue. The floors presently being acquired at 633 Third Avenue lend themselves for use as conference facilities. If both the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) and the United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA) rented substantial space in the building in the near future, it would offer an attractive option to be shared by the three organizations, resulting in

increased usage of the facilities and reducing substantially the "per meeting" cost.

7. Of the options mentioned above, only the Labouisse Hall and 633 Third Avenue were considered worth pursuing.

8. An architectural and design firm was employed to carry out a preliminary feasibility study of both the Labouisse Hall and 633 Third Avenue. An executive summary of the study can be found in the annex to the present document. The architect determined that conference facilities could be constructed at both locations. Minimum costs of constructing a conference facility in the Labouisse Hall and at 633 Third Avenue are estimated at approximately $542,000 and $770,000, respectively.

9. In addition to the one-time cost of construction, there would also be significant one-time costs for outfitting of the conference room, either in the Labouisse Hall or at 633 Third Avenue, in addition to other cost items such as maintenance of the conference facilities and, perhaps, additional staff to service meetings held there.

10. If the Executive Board decides in principle to establish a conference facility either at UNICEF House or at 633 Third Avenue, there would be an impact on the programme of space as described in the report on projections of future levels of headquarters staff (E/ICEF/1994/AB/L.11). Establishment of the conference facility at either location would mean that additional space would be required at 633 Third Avenue for a general assembly room (to replace the Labouisse Hall) or for general office space (to replace the space used by the conference facility). The estimated cost of fitting out an assembly room would be $150,000, while approximately 17,000 square feet - an additional floor at 633 Third Avenue - would be required.

## II. COMPARISON WITH UNITED NATIONS FACILITIES

11. To date, use of the conference facilities at United Nations Headquarters has not been charged to the respective subsidiary bodies. Those charges are included in the regular budget of the United Nations shared by Member States and therefore are not incurred by UNICEF.

12. Conference facilities at United Nations Headquarters continue to be available to UNICEF for its Executive Board sessions and other related meetings. While interpreters, sound engineers, conference officers and other staff required to service Executive Board meetings are available at the United Nations, the question of whether such support would still be available, when needed, to service conference facilities outside the United Nations premises is still being clarified.

## III. SHARING OF CONFERENCE FACILITIES WITH THE UNITED NATIONS DEVELOPMENT PROGRAMME AND THE UNITED NATIONS POPULATION FUND

13. The possibilities of sharing the cost and eventually the facilities among UNICEF, UNDP and UNFPA still are being discussed in a spirit of cooperation.

## IV. FINANCING

14. In General Assembly resolution 48/162, the Executive Boards of the relevant funds and programmes were encouraged to make the necessary facilities available as soon as possible without prejudice to the resources of existing programmes and projects. Since there are no funds available from existing budgets, other sources of income and the possibility of donations-in-kind need to be explored.

## V. RECOMMENDATION

15. Keeping in mind that the Executive Board sessions are expected to continue to be held for the time being at United Nations Headquarters, the Executive Director recommends that the Executive Board adopt the following decision:

The Executive Board

Decides:

(a) That the preliminary feasibility studies for construction of conference facilities in the Labouisse Hall and 633 Third Avenue be completed;

(b) That pending relevant issues identified in the present report be followed-up, in particular those relating to:

(i) Additional cost items, including the cost of outfitting the facilities;

(ii) Availability of interpreters and other conference services staff;

(iii) The possibility of cost-sharing;

(iv) Financing;

(c) That construction and outfitting of the conference facilities commence only after financing has been assured;

(d) That further progress be reported to the Executive Board at its first regular session of 1995.

## Annex

## Executive summary of preliminary feasibility study of conference facilities at UNICEF headquarters premises

THE SWITZER GROUP, INC.

*Interior Architectural Consultants*

## EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

In lieu of the preliminary feasibility study for a conference facility for the executive board, The Switzer Group, Inc. has prepared this document to provide a brief synopsis of the above said feasibility study. This synopsis shall contain the following points for information and possibly solutions for the success of the proposed conference facility and its environment.

- A list of objectives used in evaluating the technical and cost aspects of both facilities.

- A proposed time frame that illustrates the sequence of events in the design and build aspects of the proposed facility. Graphic diagrams which illustrate design and physical encumbrances to the facility.

As well, additional information has been incorporated in the following summary to supplement the "attached report" and should help provide a clear insight of the key issues concerning the location and feasibility of the facility.

### Study Objectives

The feasibility study reviewed the proposed program and the assessed the actual sites considered. The following series of objectives were developed and were included for determination and analyses:

- The efficiency of space usage in relation to size, base building structure and proposed program usage.

- The achievement of proper proximity's of ancillary spaces and supplemental technical support areas such as interpretation booths, drafting room, etc.

- The impact of designing a flexible conference facility that allows for a general assembly layout or a open forum meeting room.

- The identification of support systems which allow for the technological upgrade to a complete video conferencing facility.

- The identification of functions that may require displacement of current UNICEF House departments or rooms.

- The identification of those items which are considered as critical or major in scope and costs in order to provide for a functional design.

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The study was based on tours of the proposed spaces, followed by a series of meetings with OAM department staff. From the acquired information, a proposed schematic design was developed as well as a determination of required adjacencies and diagrams of existing physical and cost impacts.

**633 Third Avenue**

1. A centralized conference facility is possible due to the large floor (plate) area. However it may require major structural changes. (* See Note Below) With such major structural changes the 26th or 27th floor would then be capable of housing the general conference area plus all of the required ancillary areas (Drafting rooms, reprographics, UNDP and UNICEF office support facilities).

   * Note: Of the major structural costs mentioned above it is estimated that a cost well over $180,000 should be allocated for the redesign and removal of the two structural columns located on the east side of either the 26th or 27th floor to create a larger unobstructed bay of 58' - 0" capable of accommodating the general conference facility. This structural modification is absolutely necessary in order to provide for a columnless space by which visual angles are not obstructed as per UNICEF's strict program requirements.

2. Since the facility requires approximately 1/2 of either the 26th or 27th floor, the conference facility may need to share the restroom facilities with its neighboring tenant.

3. Another considerable cost in locating the conference facility at 633 Third Avenue are these associated with the HVAC system needed to meet the required comfort level for a facility of this nature.

4. Of major concern in locating the conference facility in 633 Third is the obvious and probably most critical task of security. Upon entry into the building and after passing the building's security checkpoint, anyone can enter the elevators which services floors 22 - 27. As well, these floors require 2 different elevator banks for access.

5. There are several core walls that may require sound proofing due to existing building elevator machine rooms. Careful consideration is advised due to the repetition of machine noise in the proposed conference facility. In general acoustics is of great concern.

6. Low ceiling height may present improper viewing angles for the proposed interpretation booths for the General Assembly room.

7. In locating this facility to Third Avenue, security which is critical to the international community and synonymous to the boarding area to the United Nations is lost.

**Levels B-1 and B-2 of the UNICEF House**

8. The UNICEF House locations provides all of the characteristics we believe are essential to the success of the new proposed conference facility such as prestige and intimacy. UNICEF House is adjacent to the United Nations which allow for its frequent usage. The existing proportions will allow for the level of intimacy required by UNICEF's program.

9. The existing HVAC system located in the UNICEF House sub-levels, is capable of handling the required heating and cooling loads for the conference facility.

10. If the facility is located in the UNICEF House, a need for additional support rooms will be diminished. Since there are facilities available currently in UNICEF House that may be used i.e., bi-lateral conference rooms.

11. Due to the conversion for the usage of level B-1 and B-2 as a new conference facility some of the existing spaces will be displaced and may require relocation elsewhere in the UNICEF House facility.

12. The UNICEF House has an adequate security system in place, and would require minimum enhancements to the existing system.

13. Level B-1 of the UNICEF House has the necessary ceiling clearances required to provide proper visual angles for the interpretation booths, and video conferencing requirements.

14. There are few encumbrances in the renovation of level B-1 and B-2 of the UNICEF House that would require major structural re-engineering.

Given, the programmatic requirements, levels B-1 and B-2 of UNICEF House is a natural and ideal location for conversion to a conference facility. Ultimately, this facility will provide a flexible design that can be transformed into either a multi-purpose configuration or a executive general board conference facility. This location offer many prime considerations. As indicated on the schematic diagram of the proposed facility the following were considered in the overall design:

* A secured entry is provided and will be monitored by the existing security system. Levels B-1 and B-2 both contain two bi-lateral conference rooms. The addition of self-contained secured entrance is provided to prevent undesirable traffic flow.

* The facility currently meets NYC occupancy codes for the proposed use.

* The Facility will act as a strong adjacency to existing United Nations functions.

* The facility provides an open lobby / exhibit area that is quite adequate for receiving guests and can act as an informal gathering area.

* Floor to slab distances are acceptable as is and can provide the visual access and angles required by the adjoining interpretation booths.

* The proposed facility provides for state of the art video conferencing, that allows for a needed upgrade in technology.

* There is no need for structural changes.

* The facility will have use of existing restroom facilities (must be shared in 633 Third).

## CONCLUSION

In short, both facilities are adequate for the proposed facility, The Switzer Group, Inc. feels the UNICEF House provides the best possibilities for a conference center. However, this is based entirely on cost, the degree of modifications, and location. Whereas, 633 Third Avenue can provide a full centrally located conference facility on one floor (with structural modifications) it may impose a considerable cost during the build out of the facility. UNICEF House on the other hand, requires no such modifications. Ultimately, the conference center can be placed in either of the two locations, and is purely a decision that must be made by the Executive Board and its constituent agencies.

Sincerely,

The Switzer Group, Inc.

Lou Switzer,
Chairman, CEO

## PRELIMINARY COST ESTIMATES

### 26th Floor (Budget Summary)
### 633 Third Avenue

Estimated at 5,372 SQ. FT.

| TRADE | BUDGET AMOUNT | COST PER SQ. FT. |
|---|---|---|
| Demolition | $14,000 | $2.20 |
| Acoustical Panels | $35,000 | $6.50 |
| Lath & Acoustics | $28,233 | $5.24 |
| Painting a & Wallcovering | $10,078 | $1.87 |
| Flooring | $22,848 | $4.24 |
| Woodworking | $127,000 | $23.58 |
| Glazing | $10,600 | $1.97 |
| Stone Flooring | $24,000 | $4.46 |
| Raised Flooring @ Interpretation Booths | $7,184 | $1.33 |
| Folding Wall | $18,500 | $3.43 |
| Steel Support for Folding Wall | $7,200 | $1.33 |
| Sprinkler | $14,770 | $2.73 |
| HVAC Modifications | $43,080 | $8.00 |
| Electric | $77,390 | $14.37 |
| Security Allowance | $5,000 | $0.93 |
| Structural Steel Work @ Columns | $200,000 | $37.14 |
| Shoring Allowance | $17,000 | $3.16 |
| Window Treatment | $17,500 | $3.25 |
| General Conditions | $52,114 | $9.67 |
| Contractor's Fee | $37,707 | $7.00 |
| **Total Preliminary Budget** | **$769,204** | **$142.40** |

### EXCLUSIONS & QUALIFICATIONS

1. No communications cabling estimated at this time.
2. Furniture and conference room tables are not included.
3. Building department filing fees are not included.
4. Audio video work not included.
5. Architectural design fees are not included.

**LEVEL B-1 (Budget Summary)**
**UNICEF House**
Estimated at 5,385 SQ. FT.

| TRADE | BUDGET AMOUNT | COST PER SQ. FT. |
|---|---|---|
| Demolition | $14,000 | $2.59 |
| Acoustical Panels | $35,000 | $6.50 |
| Lath & Acoustics | $28,233 | $5.24 |
| Painting a & Wallcovering | $10,078 | $1.87 |
| Flooring | $22,848 | $4.24 |
| Woodworking | $127,000 | $23.58 |
| Glazing | $10,600 | $1.97 |
| Stone Flooring | $24,000 | $4.46 |
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| Security Allowance | $5,000 | $0.93 |
| Shoring Allowance | $17,000 | $3.16 |
| Window Treatment | $17,500 | $3.25 |
| General Conditions | $52,114 | $9.67 |
| Contractor's Fee | $37,707 | $7.00 |
| **Total Preliminary Budget** | **$541,704** | **$102.01** |

**EXCLUSIONS & QUALIFICATIONS**

1. No communications cabling estimated at this time.
2. Furniture and conference room tables are not included.
3. Building department filing fees are not included.
4. Audio video work not included.
5. Architectural design fees are not included.

## HYPOTHETICAL SCHEDULE

| *TASK* | *DURATION* |
|---|---|
| Program Verification | 1 Week |
| Schematic Design | 4 Weeks |
| Design Development | 6 Weeks |
| Construction Documentation | 6 Weeks |
| Construction Administration | 16 Weeks |
| **TOTAL** | **33 WEEKS** |

Note: Our schedule can be adjusted or expedited according to UNICEF's requirements.

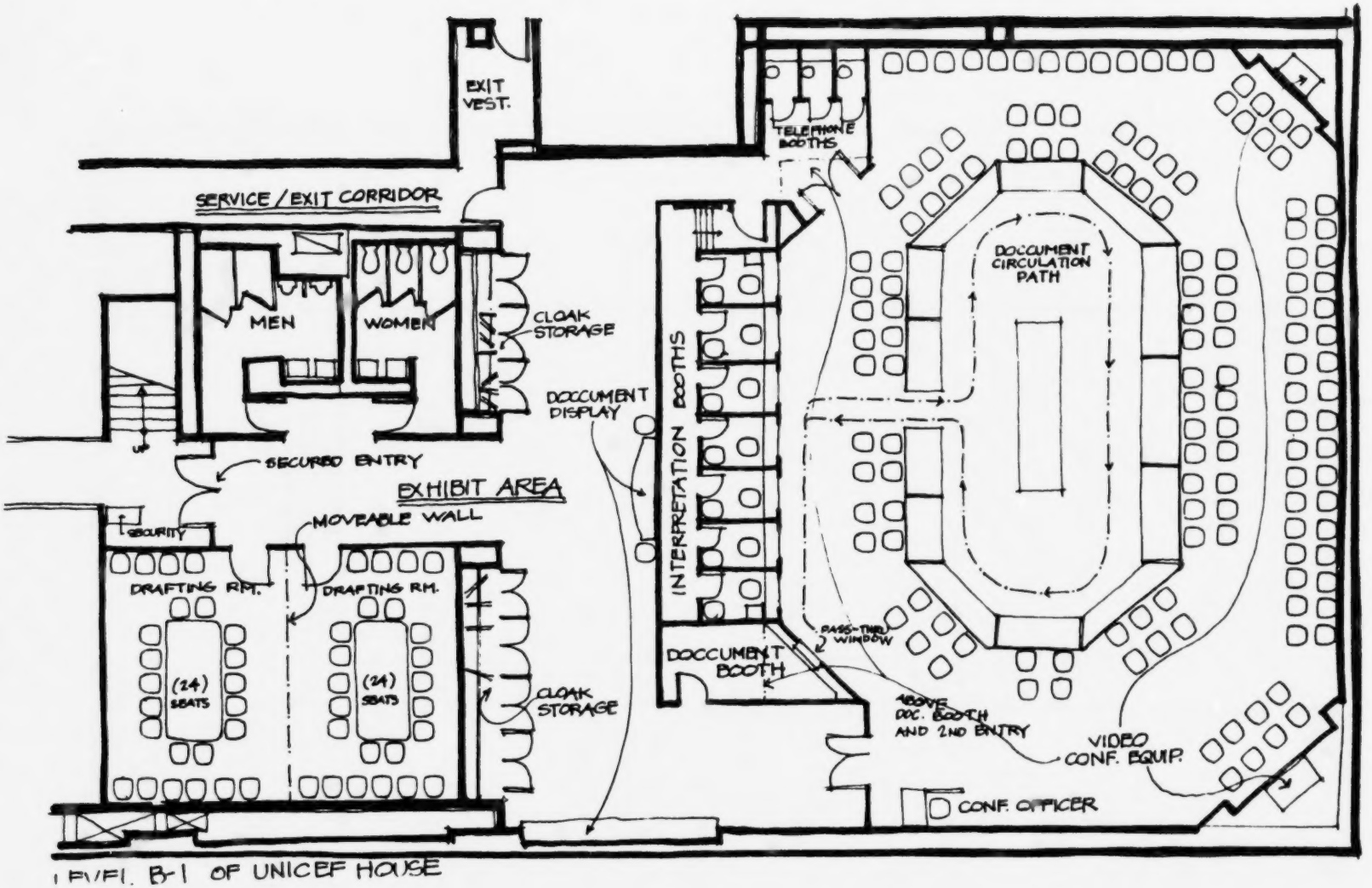


Figure I. Proposed layout of conference facility in the Labouisse Hall at UNICEF House

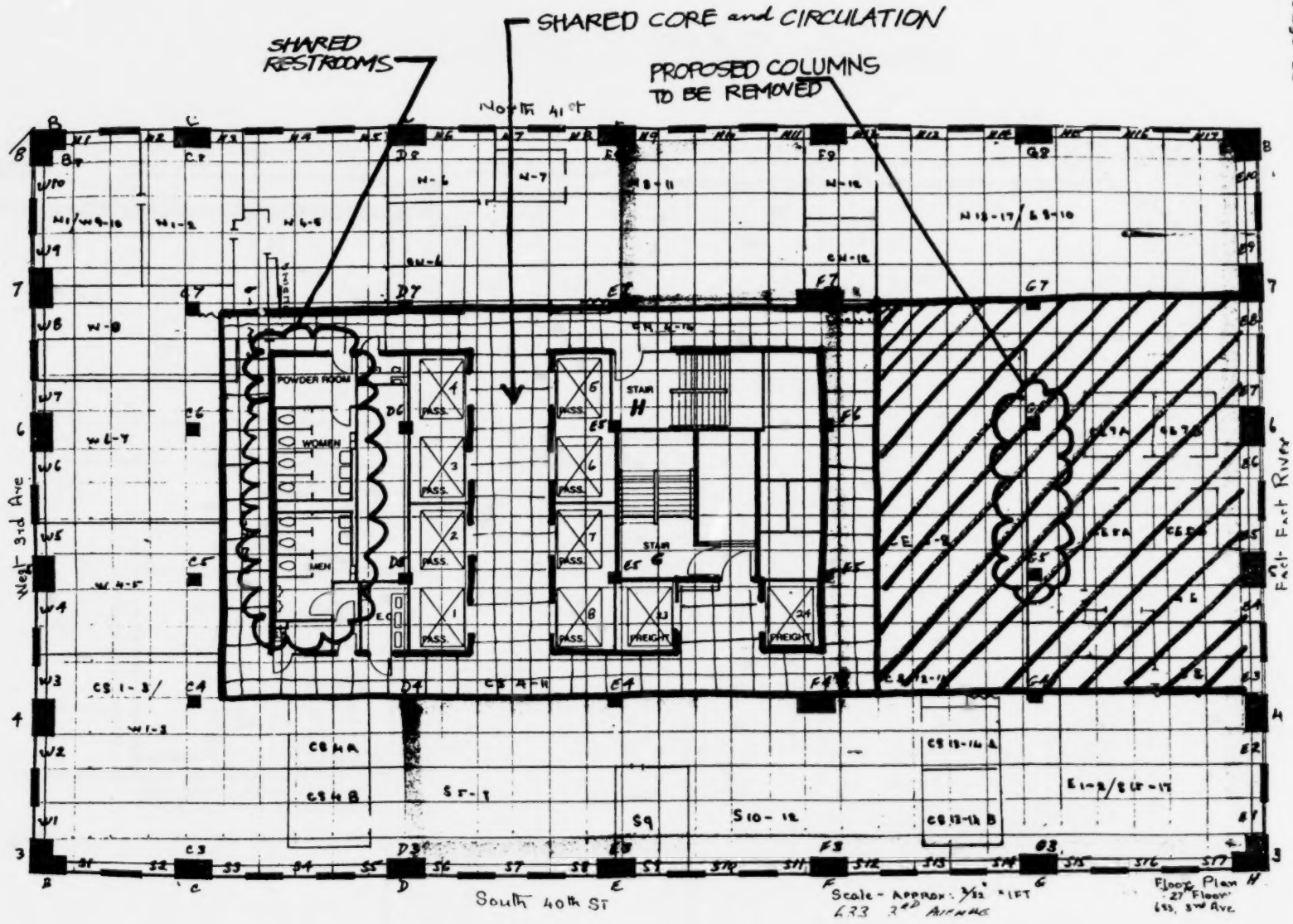


Figure II. Proposed layout of the twenty-seventh floor at 633 Third Avenue